

CLAIMS:

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1. A system for providing field service to medical diagnostic equipment, the system comprising:
- 5 a medical diagnostic station configured to store medical image data;
- a field service unit configured to generate service requests identifying a standard service function from a plurality of service functions and a unique identifier for the medical diagnostic station; and
- 10 a service facility configured to be coupled to the medical diagnostic station and to the field service unit via network links, the service facility including a service request management device for receiving the service requests from the field service unit, accessing data stored at the medical diagnostic station as defined by the standard service function, and transmitting data to the field service unit in response to the service request.
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2. The system of claim 1, comprising a plurality of medical diagnostic stations of different modalities, and wherein the standard service functions of the service requests include modality-specific functions.
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3. The system of claim 1, wherein the field service unit is configured to transmit the service request via an electronic message to the service facility, and the service facility is configured to transmit the data to the field service unit via an electronic response message.
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4. The system of claim 1, wherein the service facility is configured to verify consistency between components of the service requests received from the field service unit prior to accessing the data from the medical diagnostic system.
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5. The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one database for storing historical service data for the diagnostic station, and wherein the service facility is configured to access the historical service data for response the service request from the field service unit.
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6. The system of claim 1, wherein the service facility is configured to receive the service request, access the data from the diagnostic system and transmit the data to the field service unit automatically and without operator intervention.

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7. The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of service functions are defined by a list on the field service unit.

8. A system for accessing operational data from a medical diagnostic station, the system comprising:

an automated service facility including a server configured to recognize and execute a plurality of predefined service functions, the service functions each including accessing operational data for a medical diagnostic station; and

a field service unit configured to be coupled to the automated service facility via a network link, to generate service requests, and to transmit the service requests to the automated service facility, each service request including identification of a predefined service function and an identification of at least one medical diagnostic station.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the automated service facility is configured to establish a network link with a medical diagnostic station identified in a service request received from the field service unit, and to access operational data from the medical diagnostic station in accordance with a service function identified in the service request.

10. The system of claim 8, wherein the automated service facility is coupled to at least one database and access the operational data at least partially from the at least one database.

11. The system of claim 8, wherein the server is configured to transmit service data to the field service unit in response to the service request after executing the service function identified in the service request.

12. The system of claim 8, wherein the predefined service functions include modality-specific functions.

5 13. The system of claim 12, wherein the predefined service functions include functions specific to magnetic resonance imaging systems.

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10 14. ~~The system of claim 12, wherein the predefined service functions include functions specific to computed tomology imaging systems.~~

15. The system of claim 12, wherein the predefined service functions include functions specific to x-ray imaging systems.

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15 16. ~~A method for remotely obtaining operational data from a medical diagnostic station, the method comprising the steps of:~~

~~composing a service request on a field service unit, the service request including identification of a service function from a plurality of predefined service functions and a medical diagnostic system of interest;~~

~~transmitting the service request to an automated service facility;~~

20 ~~accessing operational data from the medical diagnostic system of interest via the automated service facility as defined by the at least one service function; and~~

~~transmitting data based on the accessed data from the automated service facility to the field service unit.~~

25 17. The method of claim 16, comprising the further step of verifying the service request at the automated service facility prior to accessing the operational data.

30 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of verifying includes verifying that the service function identified in the service request is valid for the medical diagnostic system of interest.

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BET 22-23

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the operational data is accessed from the medical diagnostic system of interest.

5 20. The method of claim 16, wherein the data is transmitted to the field service unit via an electronic message stored on an electronic message server.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of composing a service request includes the step of selecting a service function from a menu of the plurality of predefined service functions.  
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22. The method of claim 16, wherein the plurality of predefined service functions includes at least one service function common to a plurality of medical diagnostic system modalities.  
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23. A method for providing remote service to a plurality of medical diagnostic systems, the method comprising the steps of:  
establishing a menu of predefined service functions;  
composing a service request on a field service unit, the service request including identification of at least one of the predefined service functions and a medical diagnostic system of interest;  
transmitting the service request to an automated service facility;  
executing the service function for the medical diagnostic system of interest;  
and  
transmitting a response message to the field service unit;  
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24. The method of claim 23, wherein the menu of predefined service functions includes functions specific to a desired medical diagnostic system modality.  
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